

Please AMEND claims 45-47 as follows. A marked-up copy of the amended claims showing the changes made thereto is attached in Appendix A. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending have been reproduced below.

1.
~~45~~. (Amended) An exposure apparatus comprising:

an illumination optical system for illuminating a mask with light from a light source;

a projection optical system for projecting a pattern of the mask being illuminated, said projection optical system having a plurality of optical elements; and

gas supplying means for locally supplying a gas to a predetermined surface of one of said optical elements, which is closest to ^{a wafer} ~~an~~ image plane, the predetermined surface being a surface facing the ^{wafer} image plane, wherein said gas supplying means has a surface outlet port which is inclined with respect to the ^{wafer} image plane so that the gas outlet port faces toward the predetermined surface of the one optical element rather than to the ^{wafer} image plane.

2.
~~46~~. (Amended) An apparatus according to Claim ~~45~~ ^{1.}, further comprising a container for accommodating the optical elements within a space being isolated from a surrounding ambience.

3.
~~47~~. (Amended) An apparatus according to Claim ~~46~~ ^{2.}, further comprising a cover, disposed at the predetermined surface side of said container, for suppressing diffusion of the gas supplied by said gas supplying means to the one optical element.

4.

~~48.~~

3.

~~47.~~

An apparatus according to Claim ~~47~~, wherein said gas supplying means includes a plurality of gas supplying ports provided inside said cover and disposed revolutionally symmetrically with respect to an optical axis of said projection optical system.

5.

~~49.~~

1.

~~46.~~

An apparatus according to Claim ~~46~~, further comprising adjusting means for adjusting a gas supplying flow rate and a gas supplying pressure in accordance with the state of use of said exposure apparatus.

6.

~~50.~~

1.

~~45.~~

An apparatus according to Claim ~~45~~, further comprising temperature adjusting means for adjusting a temperature of the gas supplied from said gas supplying means.

7.

~~51.~~

6.

~~50.~~

An apparatus according to Claim ~~50~~, wherein said gas supplying means includes a plurality of gas supplying ports provided inside said cover and disposed revolutionally symmetrically with respect to an optical axis of said projection optical system.

8.

~~52.~~

A device manufacturing method, comprising the steps of:

1.

Claim ~~45~~; and

exposing a workpiece with a pattern by use of an exposure apparatus as recited in

developing the exposed workpiece.